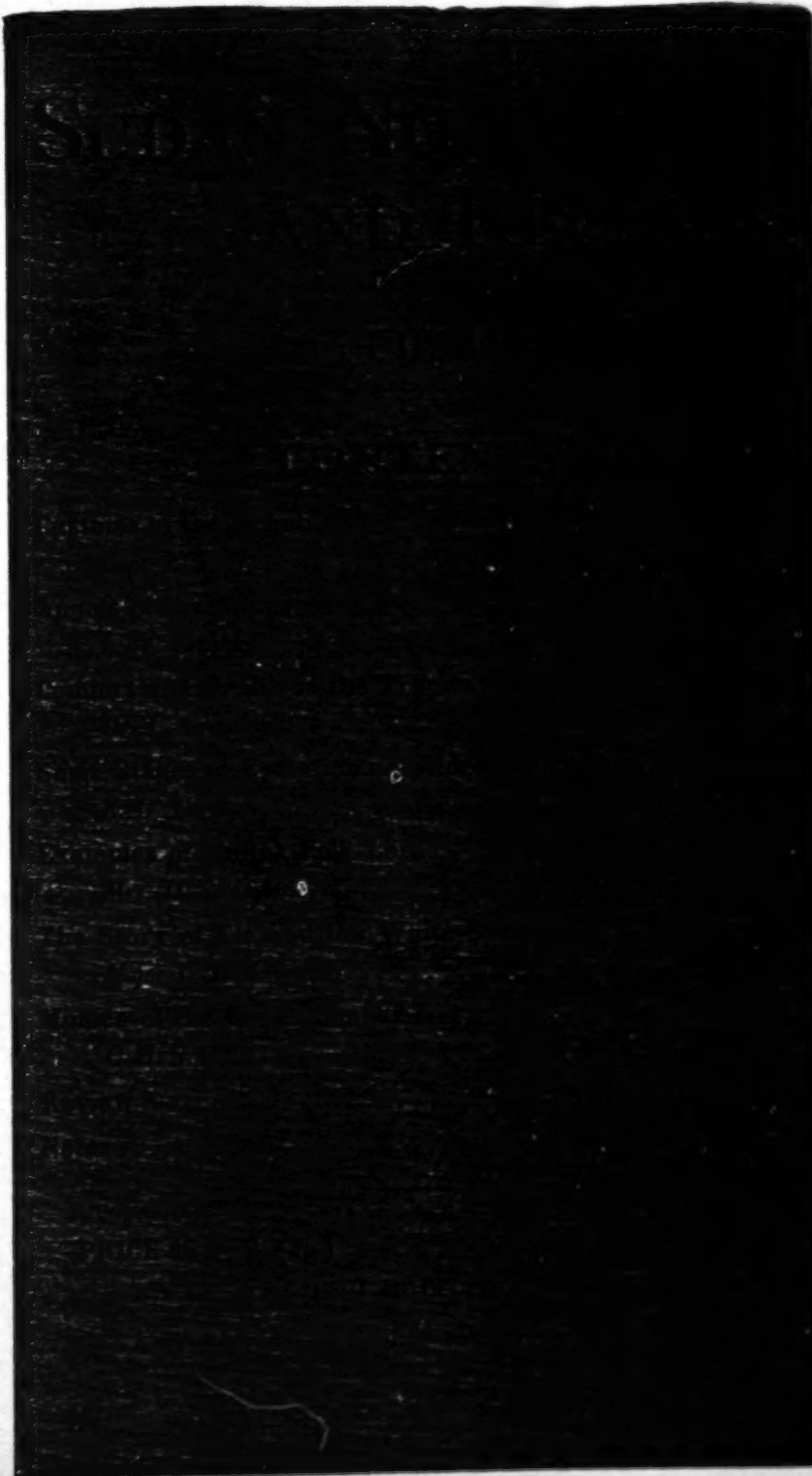


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EXAMPLES OF SHILLUK FOLK-LORE

BY MRS. D. S. OYLER.

528 The native call stories of this description "Lion Hounds". Formerly they
539 thought that if a person told them in day light he would be taken by a lion, hence they are nearly always told after the sun goes down. It is impossible to translate them word for word, as much is told in the gestures, and in the face of the narrator. With the above exceptions the following examples are literal translations.

539 1. The cormorant was looking about in the river, while the crocodile was swimming with his hunger. The cormorant was looked upon as a possible source of food, but then the crocodile noticed his pointed bill, and long neck. It looked too much like a spear and its handle to please the wily crocodile, and so he said, "Friend, why is your beak so sharp? Will it hurt people like a spear?" The cormorant replied, "You have said it". Then he offered to let the crocodile feel his sharp beak, which he did, and went away scared. As a result, the cormorants have always been able to swim peacefully on the river.

The crocodile then went to the Nile perch. He was afraid of the large mouth, and he said, "Friend, why are you so strong? Why is your mouth so large? Why are your shoulders so great?" It replied, "My mouth has no teeth. Put in your hand and see." The crocodile did so, and said, "I was afraid of food". He ate that perch, and since then the crocodiles have eaten the Nile perch.

2. A lion was under a tree eating his kill, and he was discovered by the hyena, and the hyena ran in after the food and he snatched the food, and the male lion ran after it, and the hyena was tired from running, and he covered himself with mud, and he gave battle to the lion. The hyena would bite, and his teeth would sink into the lion, but when the lion bit the hyena his teeth slipped from the mud. And the lion died, and his mate came to

give battle, and she suffered a like fate, and all the lions feared. But the rabbit came and said, "Let us take your case to the judge." "And who will judge?" "The king." But the lion said, "My case is not ready." And they did not finish the case so the rabbit returned to his country.

3. The orial, one of the animals, was fishing for snails, and he was seen by the hyena. The hyena gave chase, and the orial ran away. The hyena returned to find the snails, but they gave him trouble by hiding from him. On the morrow the same thing occurred, and the rabbit saw the hyena, and he said, "What do you seek?" "I seek the orial." "How does he trouble you?" "He is hunting snails." "I will help you." And on the morrow they laid in wait for the orial, and when he had the snails the hyena gave chase. The rabbit hid in the edge of the grass, and got the snails. The hyena returned from chasing the orial, and he said, "Rabbit, give me my snails." "Why should I give them to you? Were they taken by you formerly?" The rabbit replied, "Each one takes his own."

4. The rabbit was feeding a Nile perch. Six times it had fed the fish (hoping to eat it when fat). The lion chanced by that way one day, and saw the fish that it was there, and he pierced it with a fish spear, and he took it, and he cooked it, and he ate it. And he was satisfied with it, and he lay down. The rabbit came, and he found the fish that it was absent. And he said to the heron, "Inform me, who took the fish?" The heron laughed, and the rabbit promised to give him something for the information. And he promised that if the heron recovered a portion of the fish a share of it would go to him. And the heron said, "The lion took your fish." The rabbit went, and he found the lion lying down on the ground, and he feigned to be ill. And the rabbit said, "What do you have? (Or, you were taken by what?) I have a cold." "No witch-doctor has been near you?" "None." The rabbit told the women of the house to prepare a great jar of very hot, soup-like gruel. The food was finished and brought by the women, and it was set down in the room, and the rabbit ordered the women to leave. He said, "Lion, open your throat." And the lion opened his throat and the rabbit poured down all the hot soup, and the lion turned on his back, and he beat the air convulsively with his feet, and he died. And

53^e the rabbit went out, and he closed the entrance to the enclosure (or arbie) with durs stalks, and he said, "Women, let no one enter the enclosure". And he took the fish spear of the lion, the one with which he had speared the fish, and he went away saying, "I am going to dig medicine. Let no one enter."

The evening advanced, and the wife of the lion said to her child, "Should you not go in to see your father?". And the child found her father that he was dead, and the women wept, and the men. The sons of the lion came running saying, "Why?". And they said, "Our father has been killed by the rabbit". And they said, "Remain silent. We will kill some one in our father's place. We will kill the rabbit." And they went to seek the rabbit, and they found the rabbit eating honey, and he said, "What do you seek?". "We seek you, rabbit". And the rabbit kept one ear fastened down to his head, and one eye closed, as though he only had one eye. And the rabbit said, "Beware, do not kill of another house. Now sit down in the shade of the tree. And see I have only one eye, and my ear is misplaced. Eat of my honey and return." And he said, "The rabbits are of three different lines (of ancestors), *Kee Duk*, *Kee Shag*, and *Kee We Ni Kewie*. Was the one who killed your father one eyed?". "No". "Beware. Return not again." And they went, and their father's place was lost. No one died for him.

3. The hyena found the land lizard, and the hyena asked the land lizard saying, "Are you fat?". And he replied, "I am all oil". "Where do you sleep?", said the hyena. "I sleep here on the earth". "Do you know the jagged lightning?", asked the hyena. "I do not know it". The hyena said, "I am going". After he left the rabbit came and said, "Land lizard, you were talking about what to the hyena?". "The hyena asked me if I was fat". "Were you not asked by the hyena because he wants to eat you?" Now at night you climb up in the tree, but leave your clothes on the ground. The hyena came back at night in the rain, hurrying, yet moving cautiously so as not to disturb the lizard. The hyena leaped upon the clothes of the lizard, and devoured them. The hyena cursed the lizard and said, "What ruined it?" (He could not understand why the lizard was not fat). The lizard said, "I am up here in the tree". "Who put you up there?" "Was it not the rabbit who told me to get up here?" The hyena began to curse the

rabbit, and said, "Where is he that I may kill him?". The rabbit who had been hiding, in the grass, and listening said, "Here I am". The hyena gave chase, and the rabbit ran away. They had a very exciting chase until they came to the house of the porcupine, and the rabbit ran into it. The hyena called to the blue heron, "Go get the cham". (The cham is an iron bar used for digging. The name for it is the same as the verb for eating.) The heron flew away to the house of the hyena, and said to the women folk, "The hyena sent me to eat". They cooked food and set it before the heron, and after it had eaten it returned to the hyena saying, "I have eaten". Impatiently the hyena said, "It was not the food I meant a little while ago. It was the cham. Go get the cham." The heron returned to the house of the hyena, and said, "I have returned. Bring food". He ate and returned to the hyena, saying, "I have eaten". The hyena in wrath said, "Sit down here. Remain here at the door but the rabbit come out. I am going, but remain at the door itself."

The hyena left, and the rabbit eyed the door (put his head out), and he said, "The hyena will dig". And the heron cursed the rabbit, and said, "Your ears have been drawn out long by the sun". And the rabbit laughed heartily, and said, "You cursed me, and cursed the hyena with a very bad curse". In turn the rabbit cursed the heron and said, "Your neck is so long it shakes like grass in the current". And the heron laughed, and the rabbit ran out. The hyena came and said, "This is what I meant, this is the cham, the thing to dig in the earth. Is the rabbit here?" "He is here". "He came to the door just now, and I talked to him". The hyena said, "Sit down over there". And the hyena dug to the end of the hole, and the rabbit was not there. He said, "The rabbit is absent. Shall I not eat you?". He said, "Do not eat me thus, but toss me up in the air, and I will turn into fat, and fall into your mouth". The hyena tossed it up, and held it upward with his eyes closed. The heron spit into the mouth of the hyena, and then flew away.

6. A boy named Ajok was not able to speak, although he could hear. A lion came to the village, and said, "I am looking for Ajok". He was told that Ajok could not speak, but he insisted, and said he would make Ajok speak. Ajok was brought, but he answered nothing to the greeting of the

537 lion. The lion went and killed the ox of Ajok. The people said, "Why did you kill the ox of Ajok?" "I said that I would open the mouth of Ajok." And the lion left. It was told Ajok that his ox was killed, and the people said they would go to kill the lion, but Ajok refused. He said, "No, I will go alone." And he said to his mouth, "My two dogs, and my own throat I will take." He went, and he arrived at the house of the lion, and the king of the lions said, "The cow in the rear give to me." And the messengers came saying, "We were sent by the king to bring the ox." And he said, "Let the king come himself." And the king came saying, "Give me the ox." He refused, but finally he said, "Take it." And the king took the ox, and he spared the king of the lions so that he died. The people, the followers of the lion king ran, such as were lions ran away, but the servants who were people remained, and served Ajok. The cattle of the lions which were lions in disguise, ran away, but the cattle that were cows remained, and were taken by Ajok. And the guards with milk in them that were lions ran away, but the guards of the people remained, and were taken by Ajok (i. e. Part of the servants, cattle and guards belonging to the king of the lions, were actually what they seemed to be, but part of them were lions in disguise).

Ajok went to the domain of another lion king, and the king said, "Bring me an ox." But Ajok said, "Bring it yourself." And the lion took an ox, and Ajok spared him as he had the other lion king, and took over his subjects in the same way. He took also all the property that was of men, and he had many slaves. He took all his property, and went, and built a village near his old home. And a time of hunger came, and his sisters came to his place to gather plants to eat. He recognized them, but he seemed strange to them. He gave them milk, and told them to throw away the grass which they had gathered, and he gave them kaffir corn to fill their guards. They went home and said to their mother, "Mother, we found a man who looks like Ajok." But the mother said, "Ajok was eaten by the lions." And she was in mourning. She would not anoint herself with oil and she would not wear clothes, and her hair was permitted to grow. They said, "You go on the morrow." And he gave them milk, and he gave them kaffir corn. She said, "You are my son." And in grief she said, "I will certainly kill myself." And she ran toward the river, and he ran after her, saying, "I am Ajok." And she returned, and he had her head shaved, and

had her anointed with oil, and gave her fine clothes, and gave her a house, 539
and gave her four servants to prepare her food.

7. A great grass fire was raging, and a snake was caught in such a way it could not escape. A man passed by, and he said, "Snake, come to me, and I will save you". The snake coiled about his neck, and he carried it to a safe place, and he said, "Sit upon the earth. We have arrived." (We have arrived at our destination.) And the snake said, "I refuse. I will not sit upon the ground. Why do you throw me off?" The man attempted to uncoil the snake, and put it on the ground, but it opened its mouth, and it threatened to bite him, and the man feared. And they went, and they met the rabbit, and the rabbit said to the man, "Wherefore?" And the man said, "I am walking with the snake". And he said to the snake, "Wherefore?" And the snake said, "The man saved me from the fire, I was about to be burned. What do you say?" And the rabbit refused, saying, "This judgment is too difficult for me". And he went, saying, "Take the case to another". And they found the king frog, and the frog said to the man, "Wherefore?" And he replied, "I am walking with the snake". And he said, "Snake, wherefore?" And the snake replied, "I was saved by him". "Eh, you were saved by him, but what do you say now?" And the snake said, "Why am I forced to walk my own walk?" And he called upon the frog to hear the case, and the frog said, "In a case the participants are separate. Come off, snake. Move over further." And the snake moved off by himself. The king frog said to the chief after him, "Son of the chief, hear the case". (He commissioned his head chief to try the case.) And the chief said, "Man, state your case". And the man said, "Master, I found the snake. He was about to be burned by the fire, and I told him to run to me, and he coiled himself about my neck. I ran with him to a safe place, and I told him to go to the ground, and he refused to leave my neck. And when I laid hold on him he opened his mouth, and wanted to bite me, and his mouth is large, and his teeth are great." And the frog said, "Why was I taken? Why was I not left to die?" The frog said, "Snake, I condemn you. Has not man saved people from long ago? If there was no man, and you walked on your feet, you would have been

534 burned. The snake said, «Is that your talk? We will not see each other again. When I meet you, I will eat you, because you spoke against me. When I see you in the grass I will leap on you.» And the frog said, «Very well. When you take me in the grass I will cry, 'Aw, aw', and the man will come, and spear you.» And the frog cleared the man.

8. The rabbit moulded a person of mud, and put it on a calf skin, and put it in their house, and he went to his mother and said, «Give the traveller food». And his mother cooked the food, and put it in the house. And the rabbit drove every one out, saying, «Do not look at the traveller eating». And when the people were out, the food was eaten by the rabbit. And this took place daily, but one day meat was cooked with the food, and the rabbit was absent, and his mother put the food before the person and his mother said, «Why does the person remain in one place?». And she touched the figure, and it broke, and she was surprised, and said, «The rabbit deceives people». And she threw out the figure. The rabbit came and said, «Where is the traveller?». She said, «There was no traveller, but mud. You deceive people. You will be taken by hunger, and eat nothing.» The rabbit said, «A stranger will be killed by you». (Because she accused her son of wrong doing, he accused her of her lack of hospitality in refusing to feed a stranger.)

9. Formerly the wind-fish was a land animal, and it was going to the pool for water, for all the animals drank from a great lake. And all the animals that were in the wilderness were racing to the water, and all the animals passed the wind-fish. As they passed they laughed at him because he was so slow. And the ostrich came last, and he said, «Wind-fish, why are you left behind by the people?». And the wind-fish said, «The people are too much for me». The ostrich put the wind-fish under its arm, and like first, and the ostrich said, «Wind-fish, drink». And the wind-fish said, «You drink first». And the ostrich drank, and after it had finished the wind-fish began to drink, and it drank, and it continued to drink, and it took up all the water in the great pool, so that it was badly swollen, and all the people came, and they lacked water. And the rabbit said

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to the elephant, "Let us crown the wind-fish that he may become king". And when he was crowned he said to the elephant, "Elephant, who told you to crown me?" "The rabbit". The wind-fish then said, "You, elephant, come here. You are king. Why do you not give the people water?" The elephant said, "You are great". Then the wind-fish went to the bank of the pool, and it vomited upon the earth, and the pool was filled, and all the people drank. And the wind-fish said, "Ostrich, I am going into the water, for I am accustomed to be passed by the people". And it became a river animal.

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